



Senate Approves Grassley-Feinstein Amendment Urging the President to Make
Elimination of Drug Trafficking in Afghanistan a Priority
June 16, 2004

Washington, DC – The U.S. Senate last night approved a measure sponsored by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) that calls upon President Bush to make the elimination of the Afghanistan heroin trade one of his highest national security priorities. The measure was approved as an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill, which is being considered by the Senate.

“Afghanistan has long been the world’s major supplier of heroin, providing the global market with as much as 80 percent of all the heroin consumed each year,” Senator Feinstein said. **“This is a grave problem – especially because profits from the heroin trade in Afghanistan have historically been funneled, in large part, to terrorists bent on doing America harm.”**

The amendment also directs the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a report that describes:

- Progress made towards eradicating poppy cultivation and heroin production capabilities in Afghanistan; and
- The extent to which profits from illegal drug activity in Afghanistan fund terrorist organizations and support groups that seek to undermine the Government of Afghanistan.

Additionally, the amendment expresses the Sense of the Congress that:

- The Defense Department should assist to a greater extent in creating a safe environment for eradication efforts in Afghanistan and that our armed forces should make reducing the drug trade a priority, particularly in cases where that drug trade is assisting terrorists.

“Our current counter-drug efforts in Afghanistan are not currently adequate to respond to such a high national priority. There continues to be a strong, direct connection between terrorism and drug trafficking. The elimination of this funding source is essential to making significant progress in the global war on terror,” Feinstein said.

Afghanistan Drug Production

- It has been estimated that hundreds of millions of dollars in drug profits are funneled to Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations each year. Those organizations, in turn, can use the money to run terrorist training camps, to buy guns, bombs and other supplies, to recruit, and to fund terrorist operations throughout the world.

- Many farmers survive either solely on poppy production, or by growing a mix of legal, and illegal crops.
- Farmers in Afghanistan, like in many other nations involved in illegal drug production, often find that growing poppy is far more profitable than the country's other staples- cereals, wheat, barley, rice, and so on.
- Poppy production represents only about 8% of Afghanistan's crop production (in volume).
- Recent estimates put Afghanistan's poppy production this year at more than 5,000 metric tons – more than 50% higher than last year.
- Even if the most aggressive current efforts at eradication succeed in every respect, only 25% of the crop this year will be destroyed.

“Eradicating poppies is not easy – particularly in a nation where the central government has so little control over its distant – and even not-so-distant – provinces,” Senator Feinstein said. “But we need to make better efforts to provide farmers good alternatives, deter production, and, most importantly, eradicate the crops on the ground.”

“The value of heroin from Afghanistan could easily exceed \$3 billion. Since farmers only get a penny on the dollar, that leaves an enormous amount of money for drug lords to split with their terrorist friends. This simply cannot be allowed to continue if we hope to win the war on terror.”

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